

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Objections

1. Claims 4 and 8-10 are objected to under 37 CFR 1.75(c) as being in improper form because a multiple dependent claim cannot depend from any other multiple dependent claim. See MPEP § 608.01(n). Accordingly, the claims have not been further treated on the merits.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

2. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.
3. Claim 5 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

In claim 5, line 6, the phrase “possibly a current rectifier” is vague and indefinite because it is not clear whether this is a required claim limitation or not.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

4. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this

subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

5. Claims 1-3 and 5-6 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Vaarni et al. (US 6,630,060).

With respect to claims 1 and 3, Vaarni et al. discloses a process and apparatus for the electrogalvanic coating of metal items through a sequence of electrochemical treatment phases, comprising: placing the items to be treated in a centrifuge; delivering a treatment liquid to the centrifuge; carrying out the treatment; draining the treatment liquid from the centrifuge; and performing centrifugation to recover any excess liquid. Vaarni et al. also teaches a subsequent step of performing the above steps with washing water following coating in the same container/centrifuge. (col. 2, line 33 to col. 3, line 5)

As to claims 2 and 6, Vaarni et al. teaches inclining the centrifuge about a horizontal axis during treatment with treatment liquid, and then returning the centrifuge to its vertical position prior to centrifugation to remove excess liquid (col. 5, line 43 to col. 6, line 40).

With respect to claim 5, Vaarni et al. discloses a vertical axis centrifuge with a removable drum container, open at the top (col. 11, lines 24-25), means for hydraulic connection to delivery and drain pipes for treatment liquids (col. 5, lines 16-18), as well as tanks for storage and recovery of the treatment liquids with valve and pump (col. 9, lines 62-64 and col. 10, lines 14-15).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

6. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negatived by the manner in which the invention was made.

7. Claim 7 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Vaarni et al.

Vaarni et al. does not teach use of a hydraulic connector for the convergence of the delivery and drain pipes. However it would have been obvious for a design engineer having ordinary skill in the art to have installed a hydraulic connector extending from the bottom of the centrifuge as a matter of design preference for the pipes.

Conclusion

8. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Kirsten C. Jolley whose telephone number is 571-272-1421. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday to Tuesday and Thursday.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Timothy Meeks can be reached on 571-272-1423. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/Kirsten C Jolley/
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 1792

kcj